

Purpose

Twin Cities Flood Damage Reduction Project

Background & History

Project Background:

The Chehalis River and Tributaries General Investigation study was originally authorized in 1946. Active through FY 1988, the study produced three Interim Feasibility Reports. In June 1984 the Corps completed an Interim Feasibility Report that recommended Congress authorize the modification of the private dam on the Skookumchuck River to provide flood storage. This would reduce flood damages in the Skookumchuck valley, the town of Bucoda and the city of Centralia. Subsequently, Congress in Section 402(a) of the 1986 Water Resources Development Act (Public Law 99-662) authorized the Corps to construct the "works of improvement" that were recommended in the 1984 report. In cooperation with the non-federal sponsor, the city of Centralia, the Corps began work on design studies in February 1988. Work continued through 1990 when further project design work was stopped because the Corps found that the project was not economically justified. The useful information developed during the design process was provided to the local governments in a Wrap-up Report in May 1992.

The cities of Centralia and Chehalis have been subject to repeated flooding for many years. This flooding has caused extensive damage to private and public property and periodic closure of critical transportation routes resulting in significant economic losses. Following the severe 1996 floods, public interest in flood damage prevention significantly increased. In 1997, the Chehalis Basin Partnership was established through an interlocal agreement. The Partnership serves as a planning unit under the Watershed Planning Act, and as a citizen's advisory council under the Salmon Recovery Act.

Also in 1997, Lewis County contracted with a consultant for studies to identify possible changes to the Corps' 1984 proposal that could result in a potential economically justified project. The County wanted a community-based alternative to the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) proposal for improvements to Interstate Highway 5 (I-5) that might include raising the I-5 grade near Centralia and Chehalis by up to 12 feet. The Seattle District and Lewis County collaborated to re-evaluate the flood damage reduction project in the Chehalis River Basin. The general reevaluation study was conducted in response to Resolution 2581 of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,

which directed a review of the previous Corps report recommendations in the study area and reevaluation of flooding and environmental problems and solutions. The General Reevaluation Report (GRR) recommended setback levees on the Chehalis River and the Skookumchuck River, modifications to the Skookumchuck Dam to provide flood storage, and mitigation for environmental impacts. The recommendations in the GRR were constrained to those with no unmitigated upstream and downstream negative effects.

The Centralia Flood Damage Reduction General Reevaluation Report (GRR) and Environmental Impact Statement were finalized in April 2004. They were followed by a Chief's Report in September 2004, Record of Decision in January 2006 and project authorization in Section 1001(46) of the Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) of 2007.

The 2007 WRDA authorized the Corps in cooperation with the non-federal sponsor to pursue the following three options described below;

Water Resource Development Act 2007 Approved Plan

- Ø Construction of a 100-year level of protection levee system along the Chehalis River from approximately river mile (RM) 75 to RM 64 and along most of the lower 2 miles of both Dillenbaugh Creek and Salzer Creek;
- Ø Construction of a levee along the lower approximately 2 miles of Skookumchuck River to the confluence with Coffee Creek that would provide 100-year level of protection;
- Ø Raising in elevation approximately eight structures that would incur induced damages from increased inundation as a result of the project;
- Ø Modification of Skookumchuck Dam to allow 11,000 acre-feet of flood control storage.

Two Other Potential Options

1. National Economic Development (NED) Plan

- Ø Construction of a 100-year level of protection levee system along the Chehalis River from approximately river mile (RM) 75 to RM 64 and along most of the lower 2 miles of both Dillenbaugh Creek and Salzer Creek;
- Ø Construction of a 2-foot below 100-year water surface elevation levee along the lower approximately two miles of Skookumchuck

levee along the lower approximately two miles of Chehalis River to the confluence with Coffee Creek;

- Ø Raising in elevation approximately eight structures that would incur induced damages from increased inundation as a result of the project;

- Ø Modification of Skookumchuck Dam to allow 11,000 acre-feet of flood control storage.

2. Locally Preferred Plan (LPP)

- Ø Construction of a 100-year level of protection levee system along the Chehalis River from approximately river mile (RM) 75 to RM 64 and along most of the lower 2 miles of both Dillenbaugh Creek and Salzer Creek;

- Ø Construction of a levee along the lower approximately 2 miles of Skookumchuck River to the confluence with Coffee Creek that would provide 100-year level of protection (based on 20,000 AF of storage at Skookumchuck Dam);

- Ø Raising in elevation approximately eight structures that would incur induced damages from increased inundation as a result of the project.

- Ø Requires further federal evaluation

In December 2007, a series of storms caused significant flood damage to communities in the Chehalis River Basin. In some areas of the upper basin, the intensity of rainfall was significantly greater and more sustained than in anyones recollection. The December 2007 flooding renewed local and state interest in pursuing a variety of flood damage reduction efforts for the basin.

The 2008 Washington State Legislature, through House Bills 3374 and 3375, appropriated \$50 million in state general obligation bonds to the Office of Financial Management (OFM), working with and through other state agencies, the Chehalis Basin Flood Control Authority, and other local governments, to participate in flood hazard mitigation projects for the Chehalis River Basin. Of the authorized funding, \$2.5 million is intended for basin-wide study and projects to be identified by the Flood Authority. Of the remaining funds, as much as needed is intended to be used for the non-federal sponsor share of the 2007 WRDA authorized project. The Chehalis Basin Flood Control Authority was established in April 2008, with Lewis County acting as lead agency, and

membership including Grays Harbor and Thurston Counties, the cities of Chehalis, Centralia, Montesano, and Aberdeen, the towns of Pe Ell and Bucoda, and the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation.

Point of Contact: Charyl Francois Phone: 206-764-5522 Email: Charyl.L.Francois@USACE.ARMY.MIL